

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Visit to American Samoa

August 10-13, 2009



Dan Basta and Director of Samoan Affairs HC Tufele Liamatua

Speaker Savali Ale, and the Office of Samoan Affairs guided by HC Tufele Liamatua. The meetings were held to update key stakeholders and receive input about the Management Plan Review and additional site input on an appropriate designation process in American Samoa. NOAA believes that American Samoa can serve as a strategic location for enhancing ecological, cultural, and economic sustainability throughout the Pacific. By establishing a network of marine sanctuaries in the territory they plan to create and maintain sentinel areas for climate change, coral reef research, education and scientific technology. In addition, they plan to develop the local economy by creating destinations for eco-tourism, synergistic businesses and opportunities.

During the week of August 10, the Director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), Daniel J. Basta, visited American Samoa. ONMS is working with the American Samoa Government (ASG) to establish a network of sanctuaries for enhancing the cultural and ecological protection and conservation of marine resources. Over the course of the week Dan Basta met with Governor Togiola T.A. Tulafono, Fagatele Bay Sanctuary Advisory Council, the Governor's Coral Reef Advisory Group, the Director of the Department of Marine & Wildlife Resources, Ray Tulafono, representatives led by Alex Jennings from Swains Island, AS Legislature or Fono leaders led by Senate President Gaoteote Palaie and



NOAA and ONMS staff meet with American Samoa legislative and government agency officials in Pago Pago

On August 13, Governor Togiola Tulafono met with Dan Basta to discuss next steps. The Governor recommended that the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries proceed with management plan review at Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary and to take seven of the nine proposed locations forward for potential designation. These sites include Fagalu Bay and Aunu'u (to be developed in



Governor Togiola welcomes Dan Basta

cooperation with DMWR), the large coral and *Tai Samasama* in Ta'u, Leone Bay, Swain's Island, Rose Atoll, and an additional site to be set aside as a complete no take area exclusively for research. It was agreed that ONMS will initially begin to move forward with the proposed sites at Aunu'u and Ta'u this fall (October to December 2009). ONMS will continue to work with

village communities to further refine the boundaries of the remaining sites. In addition, ONMS will continue to work closely with ASG to coordinate efforts with local environmental agencies. ONMS

anticipates development of a draft Environmental Impact Statement and management plan will be completed by Spring-Summer 2010 where members of the public and key stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide comments. ONMS will continue to work with the villages, Office of Samoan Affairs and the territory via our partnership with the AS Department of Commerce as well as the Fagatele Bay Sanctuary Advisory council during management plan review.